

P 211343Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3917
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 000782

State for EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: SWEDEN RATIFIES LISBON TREATY

¶1. On November 20, the Swedish Parliament ratified the European Union's Lisbon Treaty, making Sweden the 25th of the 27 EU member states to approve the reform text. The debate in parliament lasted nine hours and dragged into late Thursday evening. The treaty was approved with 243 votes in favor, 39 against, 13 abstaining and 54 absent.

¶2. The four center-right governing parties and the Social Democrats voted to ratify the treaty, defeating efforts by the opposition Left and Green Parties to use parliamentary procedures to shelve the bill. The arguments from the governing parties focused on the need to make the EU's work more efficient, facilitate enlargement of the Union, and strengthen democracy. Arguments from the opposition camp revolved around concerns that Lisbon would hinder the "Swedish model" for collective wage agreements and an insistence that Sweden ask for a "carve-out" in this area. Although some MPs were resistant to follow the party line, in the end all but one MP, from the governing coalition Center Party, voted with their parties.

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